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Penang water company says supply as usual in Air Itam despite dam at 30pc capacity



GEORGE TOWN, April 16 — Water supply services are still normal in the Air Itam service area although the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam is at 30.3 per cent, said the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP).

Its chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said the 30.3 per cent dam effective capacity is not a cause for panic.

“PBAPP has significantly reduced its average daily raw water drawdowns from Air Itam Dam since February, with the implementation of the Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024 (AIDAP 2024),” he said in a statement here.

He said PBAPP is pumping water, at 33 million litres per day (MLD), from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to the Air Itam service area to make up for the reduced drawdowns from the Air Itam Dam.

On normal non-dry weather days, Air Itam Dam drawdowns were 44 MLD while during dry weather controls, it was reduced to 22 MLD but under the AIDAP 2024, only 11 MLD were drawn from the dam daily.

Pathmanathan said since the implementation of AIDAP 2024 on February 5, the effective capacity of the dam has only dropped by 2.5 per cent, from 32.8 per cent to 30.3 per cent.

He also clarified that a 30.3 per cent effective capacity does not equate to 30 days of water supply as there were other factors such as rainfall which could change the number of days and the implementation of AIDAP 2024 that reduced the drawdowns from the dam.

“PBAPP has the option to further tighten AIDAP water supply controls to defend the remaining reserves of the dam for a longer period of time,” he said.

“However, the implementation of such controls may cause some inconveniences to some consumers in the Air Itam service area,” he warned.

He said international weather reports have predicted that there will be a transition from a hot and dry El Niño phenomenon to a wet and rainy La Niña phenomenon soon.

“METMalaysia is forecasting higher rainfall in Penang in the April to July 2024 timeframe, with the arrival of an inter-monsoon season,” he said.

He advised consumers, especially in Air Itam areas, to reduce water consumption by 10 per cent in April, May and June to ensure the state has enough water supply till the expected rainy season arrives.